



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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One in three Australians not in the labour force: ABS

One in three (33%) Australians aged 15 years and over (5.5 million people) were not in the labour force in September 2008, according to statistics released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The majority (61%) of these were women (3.3 million).

Almost one-third (30%) of people not in the labour force were 70 years or over; and 15% were between 15 and 24 years.

For people not in the labour force, most (85% or 4.7 million) did not want to work (see Media Note).

For the 15% (820,300 people) who wanted to work:

- 9% were actively looking for work, but were not available to start work in the previous week
- 91% were not actively looking for work, but were available to start within four weeks

People who wanted to work tended to be younger, with more than one-quarter (29%) aged 15-24 and a further 19% aged 25-34.

Close to two-thirds (63%) of people who wanted to work were women, and 66% of these preferred to work part-time.

Women who wanted to work most commonly reported their main activity when not in the labour force was 'home duties' (36%) and 'caring for children' (23%). For men, their main activity was 'attending an educational institution' (38%) followed by 'retired or voluntarily inactive' (14%).

There were 73,900 people who wanted to work who were discouraged job seekers. Of these:

- 66% of these were aged 55 years and over
- 53% were women
- 49% stated their main reason for not actively looking for work was 'considered too old by employers'.

Further details can be found in *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2008* (cat. no. 6220.0).

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Media Note:

People not wanting work are those 'without marginal attachment' to the labour force. This includes: people who stated that they did not want work, some people who were permanently unable to work, and people who wanted to work but were not looking and not available to start work within four weeks.

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